

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 096962

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM BANGKOK APRIL 22:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 8763

FOL MESSAGE SENT BANGKOK FOR ADCTION PASSED TO YOUR STATION
FOR INFO:

QUOTE:

R 210827Z APR 77

FM AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3089

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHIANG MAI 145

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH, OVIP (FALCO, MATHEA)

SUBJECT: VISIT OF S/NM COORDINATOR TO NORTH THAILAND

1. SUMMARY: LARGELY THROUGH THE EXCELLENT COOPERATION OF
THE BORDER PATROL POLICE, MS. FALCO WAS ABLE TO USE HER
SHORT TIME IN CHIANG MAI TO THE BEST ADVANTAGE, OBTAINING
A GOOD OVERVIEW OF BOTH THE PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN-
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VOLVED IN NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION AND CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAMS
IN THIS AREA. END OF SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH MS. FALCO'S TIME WAS LIMITED IN CHIANG MAI, IT WAS
USED TO GOOD ADVANTAGE. SHE WAS ABLE TO TALK FRANKLY WITH A
WIDE VARIETY OF PEOPLE CONCERNED WITH NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION AND
CROP SUBSTITUTION, AS WELL AS SEE FROM BOTH THE GROUND AND

THE AIR THE TERRAIN, THE PEOPLE, AND THE PROGRAMS.

3. FOLLOWING HER ARRIVAL ON TUESDAY, APRIL 19TH, MS. FALCO SPENT THE AFTERNOON IN A SERIES OF IN-DEPTH BRIEFINGS WITH THE AMERICAN OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN NARCOTICS PROGRAMS IN THE NORTH. SHE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MYSELF AND BY RICHARD GIBSON, EA/TD. THE BRIEFINGS STARTED AT THE CONSULATE WHERE I AND VICE CONSUL MARIE HUHTALA GAVE AN OVERVIEW OF THE AREA AND THE PROBLEMS AS PERCEIVED BY THE FOREIGN SERVICE. FROM THERE, WE MOVED TO THE ACLS BUILDING WHERE MESSIEURS MARTIN MOSER, ROGER MACKIN AND RALPH ROSE BRIEFED US ON THE INTELLIGENCE ASPECTS OF NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION. THE BRIEFING AT ACLS LASTED FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR AND A HALF AFTER WHICH MS. FALCO VISITED THE CHIANG MAI DEA OFFICE WHERE SHE WAS BRIEFED BY THE ASSISTANT SAIC, MR. BEN YARBROUGH. SHE ALSO MET AGENTS PETER O'BRIEN AND JOEL GUTENSOHN. (SAIC CHARLES WILSON WAS ABSENT IN KUALA LUMPUR, BUT MS. FALCO REPORTED SHE HAD TALKED AT SOME LENGTH WITH HIM DURING THE MEETING THERE.)

4. IN THE EVENING, I HOSTED A WORKING DINNER AT THE CONSULATE RESIDENCE. IN ADDITION TO MS. FALCO AND MR. GIBSON, THE GUEST LIST INCLUDED THE RANKING AMERICANS CONCERNED WITH NARCOTICS PROGRAMS IN NORTH THAILAND PLUS MR. ED BARRON, STATE DEPARTMENT, AND MR. LOUIS BACHRACH, DEA, WASHINGTON. THAI GUESTS INCLUDED PRINCE BHISADEJ RAJANI, DIRECTOR OF THE KING'S PROJECT; DR. PHISIT WORAURAI, VICE RECTOR CHIENGMAI UNIVERSITY; POLICE MAJOR GENERAL VICHAI VICHATHANAPHAT, BPP REGION 3 COMMANDER AND HIS DEPUTY, COLONEL CHOOP
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SA-NGUANSAT; POLICE LT.GEN. PRASONG SAKSUPA, COMMANDER REGION 3, PROVINCIAL POLICE; POLICE COLONEL KUSOL NARKSRI-CHOOM, COMMANDER OF PNCs; AND MR. RICHARD MANN, PROJECT MANAGER OF THE UNDPAC CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM. DURING THE COURSE OF THE EVENING GENERAL VICHAI ANNOUNCED THAT THE BBP HAD THE DAY BEFORE DISCOVERED THE WHEREABOUTS OF A NARCOTICS REFINERY AND THAT THE RAID ON THE REFINERY WAS PLANNED FOR THE NEXT DAY. HE SUGGESTED THAT IF THE RAID WAS SUCCESSFUL AND THE AREA SECURE MS. FALCO MIGHT WISH TO VISIT THE SEIZED REFINERY DURING THE COURSE OF HER HELICOPTER TRIP PLANNED FOR THAT DAY.

5. ON WEDNESDAY APRIL 20TH THE BPP ARRANGED A HELICOPTER TO FLY MS. FALCO OVER SOME OF THE OPIUM PRODUCING AREA IN NORTH THAILAND AND ALONG THE BORDER BETWEEN THAILAND AND BURMA. RELATIONSHIPS IN NORTH THAILAND WITH BOTH THE BBP AND OTHER OFFICIALS WAS SUCH THAT AMERICAN OFFICIALS HAVE READY ACCESS TO ALL THESE AREAS AND SIMILAR TRIPS SUCH AS THOSE TAKEN BY MS. FALCO HAVE OFTEN BEEN ARRANGED IN THE

PAST. EVEN SO, GENERAL VICHAI AND OTHER OFFICIALS OF THE BBP OUT DID THEMSELVES ON THIS OCCASION. IN NO INSTANCE SINCE I HAVE BEEN CONSUL IN CHIANG MAI HAVE I SEEN A BETTER PREPARED PROGRAM OR A GREATER EFFORT MADE TO SHOW A VISITOR AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE IN THE TIME ALLOWED. GENERAL VICHAI PERSONALLY ACCOMPANIED MS. FALCO ON THE HELICOPTER TRIP AS DID HIS DEPUTY, COL. CHOOP. OTHERS INCLUDED MYSELF, MR. ROGER MACKIN OF ACLS, MR. DICK GIBSON, MR. ED BECKNER, AND MR. DICK MANN. THROUGHOUT THE TRIP GEN. VICHAI AND COL. CHOOP WERE IN RADIO CONTACT WITH THE OFFICERS RUNNING THE RAID ON THE REFINERY AND KEPT MS. FALCO AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PARTY ADVISED OF THE PROGRESS OF THE ATTACK.

6. THE HELICOPTER FIRST LANDED AT BAN SAM MUN, A LISU VILLAGE IN MAE HONG SON PROVINCE. BAN SAM MUN IS ONE OF FIVE UNDPAC KEY VILLAGES IN THE CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM.
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GRAM. MS. FALCO HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE THE LISU TRIBE AND TO LISTEN TO AN EXPLANATION OF THE CROP SUBSTITUTION PROGRAM BY DICK MANN.

7. TAKING OFF FROM BAN SAM MUN, THE HELICOPTER OVERFLEW PIANG LUANG, A SHAN UNITED REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (SURA)/THIRD CIF CAMP IN NORTHERN CHIANG MAI PROVINCE.

8. CONTINUING NORTH, THE HELICOPTER OVERFLEW THAM NGOB, A THIRD CIF CAMP IN CHIANG MAI PROVINCE.

9. THE CHOPPER NEXT OVERFLEW THE KING'S PROJECT AT ANG KHANG. MR. MANN POINTED OUT THE FEATURES OF THE PROJECT AND EXPLAINED SOME OF THE BACKGROUND.

10. THE HELICOPTER LANDED AT THE BPP COMPANY HEADQUARTERS AT MAI AI WHERE IT REFUELED. MAI AI IS THE NORTHERN MOST DISTRICT TOWN OF CHIANG MAI PROVINCE.

11. FROM MAI AI, THE HELICOPTER CONTINUED NORTH, ENTERING THE PROVINCE OF CHIANG RAI AND PASING OVER MAE SALONG, A LARGE FIFTH CIF CAMP.

12. THE HELICOPTER NEXT OVERFLEW BAN HIN TACK. BAN HIN TACK IS A SHAN UNITED REVOLUTIONARY ARMY HEADQUARTERS IN CHIANG MAI PROVINCE NEAR THE BURMESE BORDER.

13. WE NEXT LANDED AT BAN KO PONG HAI, A SMALL BORDER PATROL POLICE OUTPOST IN THE MAE KHAM SALIENT IN CHIANG RAI PROVINCE. THIS IS NEAR THE SITE OF SEVERAL BURMESE REFINERIES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BORDER AND THE AREA OF THE

BURMESE OPERATION OF LAST JANUARY. DURING THAT OPERATION, IT WAS NEAR THIS OUTPOST WHERE THE BURMESE ARMY CROSSED INTO THAILAND AND WERE ATTACKED BY A SHAN UNITED ARMY FORCE. THE BBP OUTPOST IS ALSO NEAR AN AKKA VILLAGE. LARGE NUMBERS OF VILLAGERS SOON SURROUNDED THE HELI-
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COPTER PROVIDING MS. FALCO WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE THAT TRIBE AND THE WOMEN WITH THEIR SILVER DECORATED HEADRESSES.

14. WE NEXT FLEW TO MAE SAI WHERE WE LANDED FOR REFUELING, LUNCH AND A CHANCE TO OBSERVE A SIZABLE TOWN LYING DIRECTLY ON THE BURMESE BORDER, CONNECTED BY A BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER.

15. DURING LUNCH, GENERAL VICHAI REPORTED THAT THE OPERATION AGAINST THE REFINERY HAD BEEN SUCCESSFUL. TWO HELICOPTERS HAD BEEN USED, AND THE REFINERY LOCATED AND OCCUPIED. UNFORTUNATELY IT WAS INACTIVE AT THE TIME OF THE SEIZURE, ALTHOUGH IT APPARENTLY HAD BEEN IN OPERATION WITHIN THE PAST WEEK. AFTER LUNCH, WE FLEW TO THE LANDING ZONE NEAR THE SITE OF THE REFINERY. WE THEN TOOK A SHORT WALK THROUGH THE JUNGLE INTO THE REFINERY WHERE MS. FACO MADE AN ONSITE INSPECTION.

WE WERE MET AT THE SITE BY MR. JOEL GUTENSOHN, DEA CHANG MAI WHO HAD COME IN ON ANOTHER HELICOPTER FOR A INSPECTION OF THE SITE. NO MORPHINE OR HEROIN WAS SEIZED BUT THE BPP HAD FOUND CHEMICALS, PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT, AND SEVERAL JUGS WHICH CONTAINED OPIUM IN SOLUTION. THE REFINERY WAS DEFINITELY PRODUCING MORPHINE, AND THE PRESENCE OF BOTH ACIDIC, ANHYDRATE AND ACTIVATED CHARCOAL SUGGESTED THAT HEROIN WAS ALSO BEING PRODUCED.

16. LEAVING THE REFINERY, WE NEXT FLEW TO CHAN KHIANG EXPERIMENTAL STATION, PART OF THE UNDPAC PROJECT. THE ORIGINAL PLAN HAD BEEN TO LAND AT THE SITE FOR AN ON THE GROUND INSPECTION. HOWEVER DUE TO THE TIME USED VISITING THE CAPTURED REFINERY AND THE DWINDLING SUPPLY OF GASOLINE IN THE HELICOPTER, WE WERE ONLY ABLE TO OVERFLY THE SITE. DICK MANN POINTED OUT AND EXPLAINED THE OPERATION.

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17. THE HELICOPTER THEN RETURNED TO THE AIRPORT. AFTER
A SHORT REST STOP MS. FALCO, MR. GIBSON AND MR. BARRON
BORARDED THE WAITING DAO PLANE TO RETURN TO BANGKOK. MS.
FALCO'S COMMENTS THROUGH THE COURSE OF THE DAY SUGGEST
THAT SHE FOUND THE VISIT EXTREMELY USEFUL AND GAINED
CONSIDERABLE INSIGHT INTO THE MANY PROBLEMS INVOLVED
IN THE NARCOTICS PROGRAMS PRESENTLY SUPPORTED BY BOTH THE
THAI GOVERNMENT AND THE UNITED STATES. TANNER UNQUOTE WHITEHOUSE
UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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TAGS: SNAR, OVIP, TH, (FALCO, MATHEA)
To: GENEVA
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